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PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF A FIRM AND LASTING PEACE AND
PROGRESS IN FASHIONING A REGION
OF PEACE, FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND
DEVELOPMENT

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-eighth year

Letter dated 11 May 1993 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of El Salvador to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a copy of the note dated 16 April 1993 which the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. José Manuel Pacas Castro, sent to the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of those countries with which El Salvador has diplomatic relations, relating to the adoption of the Amnesty Act and the reconciliation process in our country (see annex).

I should be very grateful if you would have this note circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 36 of the forty-seventh session, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Guillermo A. MELÉNDEZ
Deputy Permanent Representative
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

ANNEX

Note dated 16 April 1993 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of El Salvador concerning the adoption of the Amnesty Act and the reconciliation process in El Salvador

I have the honour to refer to a topic of vital importance for the people and Government of El Salvador in the context of the new situation in our country following the achievement of peace: national reconciliation.

As you know, the end of the armed conflict and the establishment of peace in El Salvador constitute undeniable achievements which have been widely commended at both the national and international levels.

While we have made substantial progress within the framework of the Peace Agreement, we are also aware that, at this new stage, our efforts and abilities must be focused on achieving genuine national reconciliation, which constitutes the basis for the consolidation of a firm and lasting peace in the country.

We fully understand and share the concerns which continue to exist in some countries, owing to the fact that the human rights of some of their citizens have been infringed as a result of their direct or indirect participation in the Salvadorian armed conflict, with the risks which that entailed.

Nevertheless, without wishing to enter into detailed consideration of such participation, we believe that the hatred, bitterness and confrontation which marked the years of the armed conflict must be fully eradicated, so as to give way to the indispensable solidarity and social harmony which should prevail at this unprecedented stage in the political history of El Salvador.

In keeping with these paramount objectives, the Legislative Assembly decided, by means of Decree No. 486 of 20 March 1993, to adopt the "General Amnesty Act for the Consolidation of Peace", which grants the benefits of full, complete and unconditional amnesty to all persons who in any way participated in criminal acts committed before 1 January 1992, whether these involved political crimes, related common crimes or common crimes committed by at least 20 persons.

From that perspective, the spirit and letter of the Amnesty Act derive from its all-embracing character, which in practice reflects the absolute necessity of granting pardons without any exceptions, in order to create the conditions required for the genuine reconciliation of Salvadorian society.

At a time when the sentiments of the Salvadorian people are in favour of forgetting, once and for all, the 12 years of tragic armed conflict and, at the same time, enjoying the benefits of peace, we are fully convinced that we cannot tolerate recriminations of any kind. To do otherwise would be to maintain a permanent state of social confrontation which could have negative and incalculable consequences for peace and national reconciliation.

We therefore affirm that we cannot afford the risk of regressing to old patterns of confrontation which, fortunately, have now been superseded. At this critical historical juncture, El Salvador more than ever needs the understanding